

THE SECRET OF THE SUBMARINE

Novelized From a Thrilling
Photoplay Series Released
by the Mutual Film Co.

By E. Alexander Powell
The Famous War Correspondent

Romantic story of an undersea boat designed to remain beneath the surface for weeks, with the beautiful daughter of the inventor figuring as the heroine in thrilling situations.

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FIRST EPISODE.

IN a room of the huge building in Washington which houses the State, War and Navy Departments half a dozen men sat about a long mahogany table. Though they were in civilian dress, the fashion in which they wore their clothes and the earnestness of their carriage stamped them unmistakably as men who were more at ease in uniform than in the garb of civil life. These lean, grizzled, taciturn men comprised the naval board, and it was on their judgment and experience that the American people depended for the efficiency of the gray fighting craft which form the nation's first line of defense.

"I have here, gentlemen," announced the Chairman, selecting a letter from a pile of correspondence which lay before him, "an interesting communication. It is from Dr. Ralph Burke, the California inventor—the same man, you may remember, who suggested the improvement on the Japanese chlorine powder and who perfected the condensation system which the navy is now using."

"Isn't he the same man, Admiral?" interrupted one of the officers, "who purchased the hull of that old submarine at Mare Island which was condemned two or three years ago? Bought it for experimental purposes, didn't he?"

"Exactly," was the answer. "For a number of years now Burke has been carrying on experiments in the hope of devising a system for producing oxygen from water for use in submarines. It is scarcely necessary for me to point out to you, gentlemen, that were a submarine able to draw its supply of air directly from the water, the lives of the crew would no longer depend upon the supply of compressed air or upon the boat's ability to reach the surface. Doctor Burke now writes to the secretary that he has at last succeeded in perfecting a system which is both practical and simple. He asserts that it can be installed in any submarine and that one thus equipped can remain below the surface indefinitely—for a month if necessary."

"Good heavens, admiral," exclaimed a grizzled officer, his professional enthusiasm overcoming his habitual reserve, "if this man Burke can do what he claims he will revolutionize naval warfare. A submarine fitted with his invention could slip into an enemy harbor when the fleet was at sea, lie on the bottom until the fleet returned, and then come to the surface some fine night and blow that fleet out of the water. If our submarine which went down in Pearl harbor three or four years ago had been fitted with such a contrivance, the poor devil on board would be alive to-day. They would have had air to breathe until the boat was raised, instead of dying from suffocation. We mustn't take a chance on letting this get away from us, as we did the Lewis machine gun and some other things that I could mention. There are at least two powers—and I don't have to name them either—which would stop at nothing to get hold of such an invention. Why not send an officer out to the coast at once to examine it?"

"Jarvis Hope is the man to send," he remarked. "Son of old Commodore Hope, who lost his life in the hurricane at Samoa, you remember. There isn't a brighter youngster in the bureau of construction. He's as good a chemist as we have in the service and he's made a special study of submarine problems."

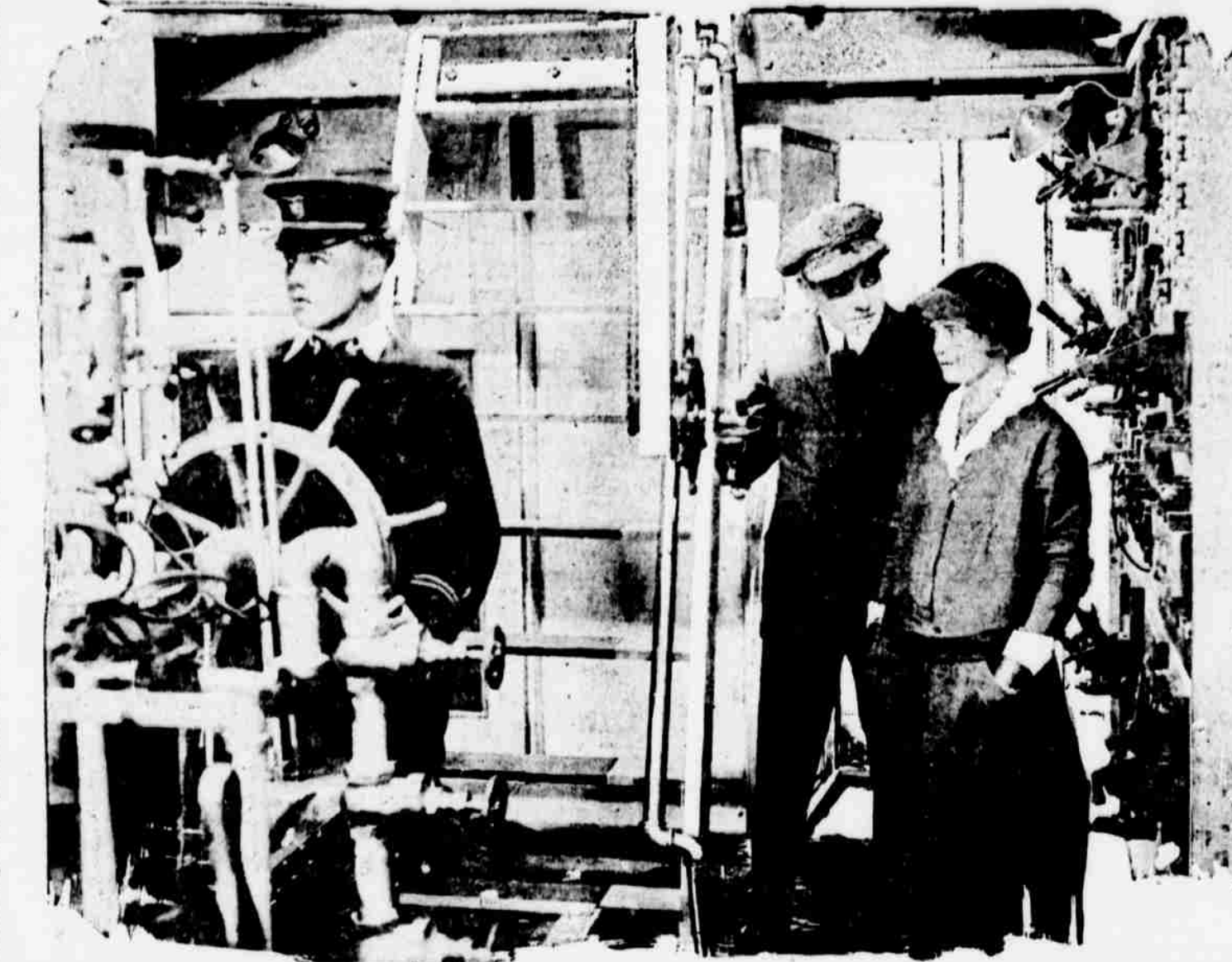
A moment later the door opened and Lieut. Jarvis Hope, clicking his heels smartly together, stood rigidly at attention. He was as wholesome, clean cut, efficient-looking young officer as one could have found in any navy.

"Mr. Hope," said the chairman kindly, "how would you like to take a little run out to the coast? I believe that you are already familiar with this letter from Doctor Burke. The members of the board are of the opinion that you should start immediately for California, examine Burke's invention, give it an exhaustive test, and, if you are convinced that it is practical, obtain an option on it. Bear in mind, Mr. Hope, that if this invention could do what Burke claims for it, it will give to the nation which holds the secret control of the sea—and the day is coming when our national existence may depend upon our possessing such a secret."

When, six days later, the accommodation train which meets the Overland Limited at Suisun Junction, came chugging into Valdivia,



THE INVENTOR GUARDS HIS SECRET CLOSELY.



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of my discovery and it stood certain that he was authorized to purchase it on my own terms.

"And you refused?"

"I did," was the answer, "and God knows, Mr. Hope, I need the money. You are not aware, perhaps, that I was once in the service of the United States. As a young man I was with Farragut at New Orleans—I still carry in my shoulder a fragment of a Confederate shell—and I helped Ericsson to build the Monitor. So even though it entails a financial sacrifice I want my own country to have the best chance at my invention—I want it kept under the old flag."

"Believe me, Miss Burke," said Hope, embarrassed in his turn, "I did nothing that any man would not have done in my place. Hook greatly overrates my services to him. It would never do to let as good a seaman as Hook become breakfast food for fishes."

"You haven't come to see my father's invention, have you? You haven't come in answer to his letter to the Secretary of the Navy."

"That is precisely why I have come, Miss Burke," said Hope.

"Oh, Mr. Hope," she said anxiously, "I pray with all my heart that the Government will take it. It has been my father's life work. Its acceptance will mean so very much to him—to me—to both of us. It would be a dream come true. Tell him that you are here. The room into which she led Hope was stacked from floor to ceiling with books. As he was idly turning over the pages of a treatise on chemistry the door opened to admit Dr. Burke.

"You are very welcome, Mr. Hope," said the old man, peering at his visitor through a huge pair of horn-rimmed spectacles. "Very welcome, indeed."

"I am thoroughly familiar with the theory of your discovery, doctor," said Hope. "My instructions from the department are to witness a practical demonstration and to apply the customary tests. If it can pass those tests I think there is but little doubt that the Government will take steps to acquire it."

"It will pass any tests that you may impose," Dr. Hope declared, "with Washington until I was positive that there was no chance for failure. The purchase of my discovery by the Government means more to me than you perhaps imagine. It means comfort for me, Mr. Hope, in my declining years; it means leisure in which to conduct research work; it means food and clothes and education for my daughter Cleo."

"What did you do for workmen?" inquired Hope interestedly. "Where did you find men who had sufficient knowledge?"

"In that respect I have been fortunate," was the answer. "My chief assistant, and the one on whom I have placed the most reliance, is a learned man-of-warman named Barnacle—the same, in fact, who brought you here. Then I have a young Japanese named Satsuma."

"A Japanese, you say," said Hope quickly. "Isn't it little unwise to let a foreigner become familiar with the details of your invention?"

"I fancy that Satsuma is quite harmless," said the inventor lightly, "but I have nevertheless made certain that he has no opportunity to observe the workings of my invention. In fact, even were he able to obtain a drawing of the apparatus, it would be quite useless to him unless he could also obtain the formula—and that is well guarded."

"I trust," said Hope gravely, "that you will continue to keep it well guarded. There is more than one foreign government that would pay handsomely for your secret."

"That I have already learned," said Dr. Burke. "Curiously enough, I was approached only yesterday by a man named Mahlin, who represented himself as the agent of a foreign government, though which one he refused to say. He did say, however, that if I would give him a demonstration

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With a sudden twist Satsuma threw Burke. At that moment Hope launched himself against the Japanese as, in his Annapolis days, he had tackled the West Point quarterback. Gradually working his right hand free, Satsuma succeeded in reaching his hip pocket. His fingers closed about the stock of an automatic pistol. There was a deafening explosion.

"Very good," said the inventor briefly. "Tell the navigator to keep her at fifty feet until further orders."

A moment later the cover of the locker was suddenly thrown up and from the coffinlike space beneath slipped the missing Japanese, Satsuma. It was obvious that this man was no stranger to the higher forms of science and that he understood, in principle, at least, what each of the switches, dials and wires composing Burke's apparatus was for. But it was evident that the governing principle, for which this complicated mechanism was built, was a simple one. The air, its oxygen drained by a dozen pairs of lungs, had gradually become so vitiated that the breathing of all on board had become labored and difficult.

"Isn't it about time to demonstrate your invention, doctor?" asked Hope, who had discarded coat, waistcoat and collar that he might breathe more freely. "It's getting pretty close in here."

"Not yet," said Burke, who was seated at the little table in the forward compartment immersed in an abstruse calculation. "There's no hurry. You haven't said much, lieutenant, but I know that you're skeptical. I wish to wait until I can make my demonstration so convincing that you will have no skepticism left."

"Twenty minutes later Hook entered. 'Don't you think you'd better give us a little air, doctor?' he inquired anxiously. 'The boys in the engine room are complaining that they can't breathe.'"

"Not yet," said the inventor, absently. "Tell them not to worry."

"Look here, Burke," gasped Hope roughly, staggering across the room, "this nonsense has gone quite long enough. Look at your daughter there—the poor child is suffocating. If you don't set your apparatus to working and give us some air, I'll take command myself, rise to the surface, and telegraph to Washington that your invention is a fake and that you are a fraud."

"I'm going to make you retract those words," said Burke, rising. "Within three minutes after Burke had returned to the forward compartment, a subtle suggestion of freshness stole through the submarine in five minutes the atmosphere was as fresh and wholesome as though they were in the open air."

"I apologize from the bottom of my heart, doctor," said Hope, seizing the old inventor's hand, "for what I said a few moments ago. You have convinced me absolutely of the efficiency of your invention, though you nearly suffocated us at first. It is scarcely necessary for me to say that I shall wire to the department to-night, strongly urging that it be purchased by the government."

"Thank you, Mr. Hope," said the inventor, quickly, a suspicious moisture in his eyes.

Entering the rear compartment, he stood transfixed with utter astonishment. For at the switchboard, his hand on one of the switches which controlled the air-current, stood Satsuma.

"What the devil are you doing here, Satsuma?" shouted the inventor wrathfully. "What have you just done to that machine?"

As Burke, carried away with anger, advanced menacingly, Satsuma's hand went toward his hip pocket. Burke, realizing the significance of the movement, instantly grasped his hip pocket.

With a sudden twist Satsuma threw Burke, the old man falling heavily. At that moment Hope launched himself against the Japanese as, in his Annapolis days, he had tackled the West Point quarterback. Gradually working his right hand free, Satsuma succeeded in reaching his hip pocket. His fingers closed about the stock of an automatic pistol. There was a deafening explosion.

Keeping the remainder of the crew covered with his smoking pistol, Satsuma threw over the handle which controlled the horizontal rudders and the sudden inclination of the floor showed that the boat had rapidly begun to rise. A moment later a ray of sunlight entered through the conning tower. The submarine was running awash. Jerking down the lever which automatically opened the hatchway, Satsuma sprang up the ladder and dived into the sea.

An instant later a wave, rearing over the unprotected deck of the submarine, poured through the hatchway into the compartment below. Cleo screamed hysterically.

"It's all right, Miss Burke," shouted Hope. "Don't be frightened. I'll close the hatch!"

Accustomed as he was to the life of hatch in use in the navy, and in the excitement of the moment having forgotten the inventor's automatic closing device, Hope sprang up the ladder and frantically endeavored to pull down the hatch-cover and bolt it in place. But a solid column of water pouring through the aperture with the force of a battering-ram, knocked him from the ladder, bruised and half-drowned. Under the weight of the water it had shipped the submarine was going down!

(To Be Continued.)



DR. BURKE EXPLAINS HIS INVENTION TO LIEUT. HOPE.

The Second Episode of
THE SECRET OF THE SUBMARINE

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